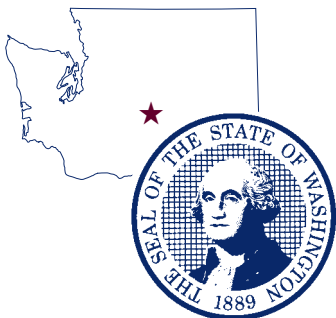




**REPRESENTATIVE**  
**Bill Hinkle**

**13TH**  
**LEGISLATIVE**  
**DISTRICT**



# 2004 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

*Serving citizens in Kittitas, Yakima and Grant counties.*

Dear Friends,

The 2004 Legislative session is under way. This year I am focusing on two fronts: fueling our state's economic engine and supporting legislation that specifically helps people in Central Washington.

One of my top priorities this session is **changing our state's business climate for the better**. Employers are still facing rising health care costs, too many regulations and rising liability premiums – all problems hurting job growth. This year I am supporting legislation that would reverse those trends and encourage entrepreneurialism and investment in our state.

I am also introducing legislation that **directly helps people in the 13th District**. Some of those bills are outlined in this newsletter. If you are interested in these issues or they directly affect you, I invite you to give me a call or even come to Olympia to testify on these bills. You elected me to represent you, but I need your help and input to do the best job possible. Inside this newsletter you'll also find resources to help you follow the 2004 legislative session.

**Thank you** for the opportunity to represent you in Olympia.

Sincerely,

Rep. Bill Hinkle  
February 2004

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

## LEGISLATION IMPORTANT TO THE 13TH DISTRICT

I have introduced several bills this year that directly help people here in Central Washington. Here are a few of them:

- **More room for ATVs and ORVs to roam – HB 2356.** This bill would give local, state and federal jurisdictions flexibility to allow off-road and all-terrain vehicles on non-highway roads, such as Forest Service and state-owned roads. The change would bring Washington more in line with Idaho's and Oregon's policies.
- **Help for landlocked property owners – HB 2506.** This legislation would give property owners who find themselves "land locked" by state-owned land a way to gain access to their property over that land.
- **Strengthening your water rights – HB 2913.** When farmers, ranchers and businesses invest in water system improvements, they shouldn't be punished by having their water savings taken away. This bill would help us reward, rather than punish, people for their investments.
- **Helping our most vulnerable – HB 2357.** This legislation would give communities an incentive to better manage mental health patients and get the sickest patients to state hospitals, where they will receive the most comprehensive care.



### WATER, LAND AND PERMITTING

#### *Three central issues in Central Washington*

In December I accompanied Gov. Locke on a tour of a local farm. The visit gave us a chance to show the governor first-hand some of the salmon restoration projects under way in the Upper Yakima River Basin. Afterward many of us met to talk about our community's water-use and watershed-planning issues. Finding **solutions to our biggest water-related challenges** is one my biggest priorities this session. We need to get away from a "use it or lose it" mentality and protect water right holders from administrators taking away water. This has been a serious issue in the Yakima Basin.

I am also serving on a legislative work group delving deeply into the issue of permitting. In November I held a **permitting summit** in Ellensburg to get ideas for changing and simplifying the permitting process. Everyone who attended provided excellent, direct input that I've brought back with me to Olympia. There are some modest proposals on the table this year that will hopefully improve permitting efficiency. Frankly, I'm a bit disappointed with the unwillingness of leadership in the House majority party to make a more substantive effort in implementing citizens' recommendations. I will, however, keep advocating to make the permitting process simpler and more efficient.



Representative **Bill Hinkle • 13th District**

## ADDITIONAL ISSUES ON THE TABLE THIS SESSION

### *The budget – holding the line on taxes and spending*

Earlier this year the Legislature successfully adopted a bipartisan, no-new-general-taxes budget. But, because of our state's small reserve and continued slow economy, the 2004 budget remains in a precarious position. This year it is critical that we **keep a balanced budget** and **resist new spending** programs. We must also make sure we use only revenue sources that provide a sustainable budget for our state.

### *Tort reform – keeping liability premiums in check*

This year I am supporting **tort reform** to counteract the negative effect our legal system has on business owners and jobs in our state. The costs of litigation – which ultimately take the form of liability insurance – are eliminating jobs and driving people out of business. The Legislature is in a position to do something about this insurance crisis by creating a **fairer tort system** that brings down the cost of insurance and keeps companies in business. When it costs less to do business, consumers ultimately win because we build an environment where companies can **create jobs**.

### *Affordable prescriptions and insurance – needed for seniors, families*

The Legislature took a step in the right direction last year by passing prescription drug legislation that saves the state money when it buys medications for people with government-funded health coverage. It was a good start. But this year I am supporting legislation that goes further by giving seniors *true and direct* **prescription drug assistance** so they can get the medicine they need but can't afford on their own.

Another priority this session is helping small employers get access to **affordable health care plans**. Health coverage is increasingly too expensive for employers because government rules are forcing insurers to cover *every service in every plan*. This year we are examining ways to **reduce these costly, government-imposed mandates** and give employers **more flexibility** to offer affordable, basic health coverage for working families.

## WHAT BOEING'S CHOICE SAID ABOUT OUR BUSINESS CLIMATE



Last session I co-sponsored legislation aimed at convincing Boeing to assemble its new 7E7 jetliner in Washington. In December, the company awarded the project to Everett. Of course, those of us in the 13th District would have preferred Boeing choose the Moses Lake site. But **keeping the project in Washington** is still good news, for several reasons:

✓ The 7E7 will directly or indirectly create **17,300 new jobs** over the next 12 years. *Job creation* is House Republicans' top priority, and keeping the 7E7 assembly in Washington helps us get there.

✓ When Boeing chose Washington it sent a message to site selectors and employers everywhere: the Legislature is working hard to **improve Washington's business climate**, and they should consider our state a profitable place to locate.

✓ Moses Lake's position as a finalist for the 7E7 project thrust **Central Washington on the national stage**, touting our business benefits (without a huge marketing budget) and proving we can compete with just about any location when it comes to being a superior site for employers.

But Boeing's choice also sent a message that, without changes, Washington just can't compete. So this session House Republicans are seeking more changes that will continue improving Washington's business climate for *all* employers. We are putting the entire **workers' compensation system** – including why rates are up nearly 39 percent in just two years – under the microscope. We are also looking at ways to slow Washington's ballooning **minimum wage requirements** – now the highest in the nation. And we are taking steps to rein in **over-burdensome regulations** and the agencies that impose them. All of these proposals would position our state for a strong and quick economic recovery, and **create needed jobs and prosperity for families**.

# 2004 Legislative Report

# THE 2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION: STAY INVOLVED!

Information about the 2004 legislative session is as close as your telephone, keyboard and television. There are plenty of ways to get involved and stay informed on issues important to you.

## **Information available to you:**

### **State government:**

[www.access.wa.gov](http://www.access.wa.gov)

### **Legislative information:**

[www.hrc.leg.wa.gov](http://www.hrc.leg.wa.gov)

### **Participating in the legislative process:**

- Go to the House of Representative's web site:  
**[www.leg.wa.gov/house/](http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/)**
- Click on "General Info"
- There you will find the "Guide to Effective Legislative Participation" and information about the law-making process

### **Best way to check the status of bills:**

- Go to the Legislature's web site:  
**[www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)**
- Click on "Bill Info"
- There you will find a host of information relating to each bill passing through the Legislature

### **Other ways to get information:**

I would be happy to speak to your group, organization or school. Topics might include:

- Issues before the Legislature
- How does the legislative process work?
- What it's like to be a legislator
- Issues specific to the 13th Legislative District

### **Watch TVW.**

TVW (TV Washington), a non-profit public affairs network, broadcasts the Legislature on cable TV throughout the state. Call TVW for programming information at (360) 586-5555, or visit TVW's website at **[www.tvw.org](http://www.tvw.org)**

### **Ask for assistance.**

Legislators are elected not only to represent you, but also to serve you. If you are facing challenges working with a state agency, please contact me for help.

## 2004 Legislative Report

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*Rep. Hinkle speaks on  
the House floor.*

